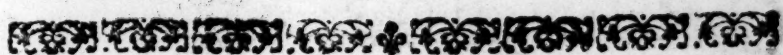


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A
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
Propriety of Manners,
TASTE and BEAUTY.



DISCOUSE

CONVING



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Propriety of Manners,
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BEING AN
INTRODUCTION
TO A

W O R K

Hereafter to be published,
INTITULED,

*Moral Beauty and Deformity,
exemplified and contrasted in two
Living Characters.*

Addressed to the Best and Worst of Men
throughout His Majesty's *Brittish*
Dominions.

Particularly those in HIGH LIFE.

To which will be added,

An Account of a Work now preparing for the
Press,

INTITULED,

*A Demonstration of the Law of Moral
Rectitude.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for the AUTHOR.

DISCOURSE

Property of
TASTE and BEAUTY.

BY
A. G. B. C.

W. O. R. K.



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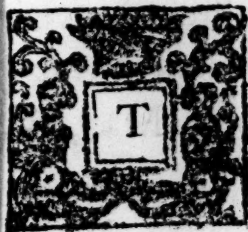
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A N
I N T R O D U C T O R Y
D I S C O U R S E
C O N C E R N I N G
Moral Propriety, Taste, and Beauty.



THE Moral-View, or Motive, of every intelligent Agent, must be either some Good or Happiness to itself, or to others. The former of these Motives, cannot belong to an absolutely Perfect and Independant Being ; because it implies, some natural Want or Imperfection ; something to add to, or promote its Happiness, and therefore can never be that of the Deity. Whence it necessarily follows, that the Communication of Universal Happiness, must be the eternal moral-View, or Motive, of the Creator.

B

Now

Now the Creator, certainly wills what is Right, Fit or Proper. But it appears from what has been said above, that the Creator's eternal moral-View or Motive, is, the Communication of Universal Happiness. Therefore the Communication of Universal Happiness, must be moral Fitness or Propriety.

Man necessarily and invariably desires, and pursues his own particular Happiness, (as I presume every Individual of the human Species may experience,) through every Period of his Existence. Consequently the moral-View or Motive of Man, is different to that of the Creator.

Since then the moral-View or Motive of Man, and the Creator, are different; can the Law and Standard of moral-Propriety, be the same to both? Yes, it is one and the same to all moral Agents, from the highest to the lowest, through all Time and in all Worlds; according to the respective Natures and Powers of each. Amongst

mongst the many Reasons which induce me to think so, the following, are some of the most remarkable.

1st. Because the Endeavour to promote Universal Happiness, is productive of Universal Harmony or Order, and therefore answers the End, Design, Intention or Will of the Creator.

2d. Because moral Harmony or Order, is moral Propriety or Fitness, through all Time, and in all Worlds.

3d. Because the Pursuit of partial, seperate, and independant Happiness, hath ever been productive of Misery, Discord and Disorder, and therefore unfit and improper, and contrary to the End, Design, Intention or Will of the Creator.

4th. Because the Endeavour of every moral Agent, to promote Universal Happiness, according to the full Extent of the Power of each, is a compleat Imitation, of the greatest and best of moral Agents, notwithstanding their Difference of Power or natural Perfection.

5th. Because every good Man doth experience, that the means of particular, consists, in the Endeavour to Promote universal, Happiness.

6th. Because the Happiness of each Individual, arises in proportion to their Desire and Pursuit of Universal Happiness, so far as their particular Constitutions, Circumstances and Situations in Life, will admit of.

7th. Because it evidently appears, that the All-wise Creator, hath inseparably connected Particular, and Universal Happiness.

On the Strength of the foregoing Reasons, I will venture to draw the following Conclusion, *viz.* That the Law of moral-Propriety, is eternally one, and the same, to all Degrees of moral Agents, in all Worlds, notwithstanding the Difference of the moral-View or Motive.

If therefore the Law of moral-Propriety, is universally the same, to all kinds or Degrees

degrees of moral Agents, it will follow, that all those who conform thereto, according to the measure of their Power, are arrived at an equal Degree of moral-Perfection or Rectitude, notwithstanding their different Degrees of Power, Intelligence, or Natural-Perfection. This Conclusion necessarily flows from the Premises, if it is granted, that Moral-Propriety, or Rectitude, must be the Result of Power, or Agency.

The Springs or Principles of human Actions, are Affections or Feelings of Pleasure and Pain, resulting from the Operation of the Objects of Sense and Imagination, previous and consequent to Reflection, and are called Passions, Inclinations, Instincts and Appetites; are Modifications of Self-love, or Desire of Self-happiness, and consequently necessary. Therefore human Agency consists in a Power of regulating, adjusting, or directing these, in a certain Degree. Whence it is evident, that the Man who regulates, adjusts, or directs, those Springs, or Principles of Action, consistently with Universal Happiness,

piness, according to the Measure of his Power, acts fitly and properly ; conforms to the Law of true and universal Righteousness ; merits and obtains the Approbation of the perfectly wise and just God ; whether he resides in *London, Rome, Constantinople, Cape of Good Hope*, or the Woods of *Hanover* ; or whether his Name be *F--st--r, D---ve*, or *Peter the wild Youth*. And therefore all Mankind are good and holy, proportionably to their Approach to the universal and eternal Standard, notwithstanding their Difference of Creed, or Religious Appellation. 'Tis thus Man may be said to act beautifully ; to walk with God ; to imitate His moral Character ; to co-operate with him, and *to be holy as he is holy*.

That Sentiment or Feeling of Love, Hate, or Indifference, resulting from the Judgment we form of Things, is the ruling Principle, or Helm of human Conduct, and is called Taste. It is true or false, as the previous Judgment is : Consequently true Taste is the
Result

Result of right Judgment. But wherein doth a true or right Judgment of Things consist? It consists in a Perception, or Discernment, of the truly Excellent or Useful, obtained (so far as we are capable of obtaining it) by Means of Reason and Experience. But what is the Standard, or Criterion, of the truly Excellent or Useful? It is Universal Happiness, or Good. All Things natural and moral, are excellent, useful, amiable, and beautiful; and the contrary, in Proportion to their Relation, or Repugnance, to that eternal Standard, and accordingly become the Objects of a true and false Taste. Thus the Creator is infinitely more beautiful and excellent than any other Being, because of his Relation to the Universal Good, or Happiness: And therefore the supream Object of Love and Adoration to all those, who have any Pretensions to Propriety and Elegance of Taste.

Hence the Relation of Things to Universal Happiness constitutes their Beauty. And therefore Beauty is absolute and eternal;

nal; and the natural and moral inseparably connected.

Thus the everlasting Law of Moral-Propriety, is likewise the Law of the Beautiful, and of true Taste.

Relation to Universal Happiness is then the Rule, or Criterion, of Beauty, in all Objects, whether natural or moral; by which we can precisely determine their various Degrees, so far as we can trace this Relation. For Example: The moral Character of *Rusticus* is equally virtuous with that of *Horatio*, but not equally beautiful; because their Relations to Universal Happiness are widely different: Consequently their Beauty will be in the same Proportion. Thus where there is an Equality of Virtue, the Beauty increases with the Power of communicating Happiness. Whence, if the Power of *Horatio* is to that of *Rusticus*, as a Thousand to One, their Moral Beauty will be in the same Proportion. What a Beauty then is a wise and virtuous Prince! How extensive
his

his Power! how valuable! how amiable! and how excellent! What a Calamity the Loss of such a one! Reflect on the late Prince of *Wales*, all ye who claim Refinement and Elegance of Taste, and, forbear to weep!

As the Law of Virtue is the Law of true Taste, and of the Beautiful, the Tastes of *Horatio* and *Rusticus*, with regard to Propriety, are in Proportion to their Knowledge of the Beautiful; and the Difference of that Knowledge is as their Difference of Power and Opportunity. So that if *Horatio's* Knowledge of the Beautiful were to *Rusticus's*, as a Thousand to One, their Propriety of Taste would be in the same Proportion.

Manner of Education, natural Constitution, Genius, Customs, Habit, Conversation, Riches, Honours, Poverty, Contempt, &c. have each a particular Influence in forming the Taste. Whence that vast Variety amongst People of the same Degree of Virtue. Thus Men bound to

the same Port, steer different Courses, and meet with various Fortune. Some glide gently along with a steady Gale, and a smooth Sea; whilst others are dashed to and fro by tempestuous Waves, or cast upon Rocks and Quick sands. A striking Example just now occurs to my Mind: Poor Mr. R——, oppressed with Want, and the Contempt of false Friends; how different his Fortune to Mr. M——'s, tho' much his Superior in Knowledge, in Genius, and in Virtue. But that All-seeing Eye, which nicely discerns the Boundaries of Power and Necessity, and can precisely determine their Equality and Difference, and the Degrees of Virtue resulting from thence, in every Circumstance and Manner of Agency, will judge otherwise than prejudiced, partial, corrupt, and short-sighted Men. But to return:

Horatio's Fortune, Literature, Knowledge of the World, Experience and sublime Virtue, have enabled him to acquire an extensive Knowledge of the Beautiful; and by long Habit he has attained to such

a Delicacy of Taste, so as to be affected by the Beautiful, in a Manner instantaneous, and antecedent to any Judgment or Raciocination concerning the Object. This surprising Delicacy to be found in such-like Men, hath induced many of them to conclude, that their is an internal Sense of Beauty, implanted by the Creator, in the original Frame of the human Constitution, as a moral Director. But this is contrary to Experience. Propriety and Delicacy of Taste is merely the Effect of Culture. Indeed People of equal Virtue, and of equal Delicacy of Passion, are equally affected by some Kinds of beautiful Phenomena, and in those Instances may be said to have equal Propriety and Delicacy of Taste. But then this is only in some particular Instances. It must be general, it must extend to all beautiful Phenomena, to justify the above Conclusion. An extensive Knowledge of the Beautiful is only acquired by a polite and virtuous Education: And consequently Propriety and Delicacy of Taste. 'Tis thus a Moral-Director, or Monitor is obtained, whose
 Dictates

Dictates can reach the Heart, and impel the moral Springs, long before these of Reason can reach the Head. And it is thus Men of sublime Virtue, and refined Taste, in a Multitude of Instances, perceive the Truth, as sense doth the Light of the Sun. Moral-Perfection, or the Art of making ourselves, and other People happy, is attained and retained, as all the other Arts, *viz.* by Study, Conversation, and Practice. By these Means we may rise to the most exalted Pitch of Perfection, Human-nature is capable of. — With humble Submission to the Ladies, and their Favourites, we will call this Sort of Perfection POLITENESS. Indeed, Ladies, it is nothing more, nor less, than the Art, Habit, or Facility, of making ourselves, and other People, happy. Many of those Gentlemen, you are generally so fond of, are but the Apes of Politeness.

As the Nature of Moral Beauty and Deformity, is better explained by Example, than any Kind of abstracted Reasoning, I have attempted the Characters
cf

of two very Great Men. The one greatly Good, and the other greatly Bad. Whereby, I humbly presume, the *lovely* and *detestable* (or in other Words, the *beautiful* and *deformed*) in Manners, will be exemplified in almost every Circumstance or Relation of Human Agency. These Characters are now nearly finished, and will be speedily put to the Press.



APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

An Extempore Soliloquy on seeing in one of the public News-Papers an Account of the Death of His Royal Highness Frederick Prince of Wales.

WHAT *Fred'rick* dead! — oh Heav'ns —
it is not so!

Britannia! cou'dst thou bear the fatal Blow?

Some wicked Demon envious of thy Bliss,

Has surely printed and promulged *this!*

Ah no! ——— alas! *Britannia* droops her Head,

Her Guardian and Defender must be dead!

The Muses weep! calm Virtue sheds a Tear!

And *Liberty* bewails her Patron dear!

Oh! mourn *Britannia*, mourn, thy Loss deplore,

And let thy Groans be heard on ev'ry Shore!

From Pole to Pole, as far as Reason's Ken,

Send forth thy Sighs, he's gone, the Friend of

[Men!

Lament

Lament ye Muses, spread the doleful Sound,
Where-ever Sense and Virtue can be found :
In melting Accents breathe the solemn Lay,
For Death has snatch'd your Hopes and Pride
[away!

Oh Liberty! the gen'rous Prince is gone,
Whose beauteous Sceptre sparkled on thy
[Throne!
Arts, Trade, and Plenty, all thy lovely Train,
Lift up your Voices, join the mournful Strain.

Oh! piteous Sight! hark how they weep aloud,
The hopeless, friendless, poor distressed Croud!
For when his searching Eye found the Distress'd,
He saw and judg'd, — reliev'd, and so was
[blest'd.

Come ye whose Riches, Dignity and Blood,
Connect your Virtue to the publick Good ;
Reflect how *Fred'rick* Happiness convey'd ;
What Beauty all his Character display'd ;
Assert your Love ; his Memory revere,
Not only by the pensive Garb and Tear ;
But likewise thus, — His Beauties imitate,
As Friend and Husband, Father, Magistrate.
So shall you then express a Grief sublime,
Whose Lustre wou'd thro' distant Ages shine ;

[16]

A Grief that wou'd in part the Loss restore ;
Wou'd bless yourselves, your Country, and the
[Poor.
And was he conscious of such virtuous Woe !
'Twou'd make his Happiness more amply
[glow.

F I N I S.

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